

Dear Judge Pepper,

October 15, 2024

To say Vaun Mayes is civically engaged and an asset to the community is the understatement of the century. He is involved in so many arenas it would take several pages to list and describe them. However, his work teaching people how to deescalate tense and potentially violent situations is masterful and worthy of note. When I met him four years ago I was struck by his intelligence, humility and professionalism. To meet a community leader that is both approachable and effective is refreshing and truly impressive. Vaun is well-known for his work in the Black community in Milwaukee but I can say that he is equally well-respected in the suburbs. I have worked closely with him in our work with Tosa Moms Tackling Racism. I have lived in Wauwatosa for 20 years and have been active in my role as a parent. As he met leaders in Wauwatosa, Mr. Mayes was polite, gracious and engaging. As a leader himself I have found him to be knowledgeable, encouraging and really quite inspiring. I have told him before that he would make a great teacher but in many ways he is teaching people everyday with patience and compassion. Mr. Mayes has been so supportive in our work in Wauwatosa. He is the classic leader that puts people at ease and brings out the best in the people around him. I can say with all sincerity that I am proud to know him and look forward to watching the rest of his career as an activist.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Mara Kachelski

Dear Judge Pepper,

I am writing to ask you to consider dismissing the charges against Vaun Mayes and grant him time served. Vaun is a living example of dedicating yourself to the community, and I am proud to have known him for nearly a decade.

Vaun was one of the first people I met when I moved to Milwaukee in 2014 after graduating from NYU, thinking my stay here would be temporary. Thrust into a city that is highly segregated and often under-resourced, I was jarred by the pain and injustices on display - but in large part through the lens of Vaun's activism and commitment to the community, I saw hope and resilience in Milwaukee, and decided to stay. Although we walk different paths today, my work as the Associate Director of the Milwaukee Turners - which includes civic and voter education in high schools, colleges, and community groups; stewarding grants for organizations working on youth justice; and producing nonpartisan educational forums on issues important to Milwaukeeans - is in many ways shaped by the tenacity and optimism for Milwaukee that I learned from Vaun.

I share my story, but I also know there are countless others like it - lives that have been touched by Vaun's persistent hope in Milwaukee, his mentorship for its youth, and his leadership in imagining a more equitable future. Since I met him in 2014, I have seen Vaun positively affect the lives of likely thousands of Milwaukeeans, through backpack drives and sharing resources, Program the Parks, de-escalation work, help for victims of domestic violence, education and advocacy, and partnerships with other community organizations like the Milwaukee Turners and Wisconsin Voices.

Vaun has appeared as a panelist on the Milwaukee Turners Vel Phillips civic educational forum multiple times alongside judges, elected officials, DOC Regional Chief Neil Thoreson, and other community leaders. He has shared his wisdom and lived expertise with thousands of viewers online and in-person, and engaged in thoughtful consideration of important issues like youth violence and re-entry with system leaders.

Recently, the Milwaukee Turners co-hosted a voter educational concert aimed at getting young Milwaukeeans to register to vote, and when I thought about the importance of having a trained team who could de-escalate any issues that might arise during the show, I immediately thought of Vaun and ComForce. He and the team he trained showed up and were an integral part of ensuring a safe, successful, and positive evening focused on voter registration and turnout for young people.

For the last two years on Christmas Eve, I had the pleasure of joining Vaun and his team to distribute holiday gifts to under-resourced neighborhoods in Milwaukee - work Vaun has been doing for ten years in a row. Last year, we gave out over \$13,000 in cash and gifts to families in Parklawn and Westlawn alongside the Milwaukee Fire Department. I cannot think of a better way to spend Christmas Eve, nor truer to the spirit of Christmas.

Milwaukee needs more people like Vaun - who believe fiercely in the humanity and dignity of its residents, and who work every day to make Milwaukee better. I sincerely hope you will consider the totality of his contribution to the community, his profound and positive influence on Milwaukee's youth and on people like myself, and the importance of his ongoing and future contributions, and dismiss these charges.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Krissie Fung
Associate Director, Milwaukee Turners
krissie@milwaukeeeturners.org
831-332-9590

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October 15, 2024

Honorable Pamela Pepper
517 E. Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Support for Mr. Vaun Mayes

Dear Judge Pepper:

I am writing in support of Mr. Vaun Mayes. Over the last five years, I have had the opportunity to get to know Vaun personally and professionally, and I can say without hesitation that he is an integral part of the Milwaukee community.

As a community organizer, Vaun has tirelessly led efforts to assist those in need, from organizing food and toy drives to advocating for justice and equality. His compassion for the people of Milwaukee is authentic and unwavering. He is not only passionate about serving others, but he is also deeply committed to bettering the lives of those who often have no voice. I have witnessed firsthand how his efforts have touched the lives of countless families, and his leadership has become a beacon of hope in the community.

While Vaun is now facing the consequences of his actions, I firmly believe that he has taken full accountability for his mistakes. He has demonstrated that he has learned from his mishaps, and his resolve to continue making a positive impact on our community is clear. His passion for justice and equality is felt throughout the city, and it would be a tremendous loss to Milwaukee should the Court impose a harsh sentence.

In my experience working with Vaun on various matters, I have consistently been impressed by his heart and genuineness. His character is truly unique, and his dedication to uplifting others is something I believe should be taken into account when considering his sentence. Vaun has always shown that he is committed to turning his life around, and I urge the Court to provide leniency in this matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



B'Ivory LaMarr, Esq.
The LaMarr Firm, PLLC



Jacqueline Bogenberger

414-940-4779

jbogenberger91@gmail.com

4781 N. Elkhart Ave. Whitefish Bay, WI 53211

October 15, 2024

Dear Your Honorable Judge Pepper,

This letter is in regards to the character of an amicable man whom I consider admirable, inspiring, and genuinely compassionate, Vaun Mayes. I have known Vaun now for about five years- yet I do wish I had met him sooner. The value of my life has only increased as Vaun has provided me both wisdom from experiences and countless opportunities to help others and give back in this great city of Milwaukee.

My name is Jackie Bogenberger and I have spent the greater part of the past ten years focused on bettering our community and bringing love and light to people's lives where I can. My main focus has typically been dedicated to helping others in the recovery community, dealing with the transition of addiction into sobriety. However as you know, this specific journey often is related to or intertwined with the grasps of mental health, houselessness, or minimized representation in many systemic factors. Serving as Manager of The Milwaukee Alano Club for eight years my path often crossed with Vaun's own humanitarian footsteps through this city. When I moved to serve as Vice President of Community Relations, knowing Vaun had been extremely beneficial for finding the exact right contacts, elected officials, or other Organizations whom which I could find support, partnership, or connections with. I am grateful for his always helping hand through all of those things. I am also grateful for the expanse of knowledge he freely provides so many in this city. Because of his humbleness you may never know, but Vaun's work within this community goes quite further than what any social media platform might show you and way beyond what any misanthropist might tell you.

In the years I have known Vaun Mayes, there is not a single time he didn't answer my phone calls or help me out when I reached out. Even in his busy schedule, filled with genuine purpose and hopeful agendas, he somehow has always made time. The craziest thing is I believe this is to be true for not only me, but likely the majority of those in need in this city. Vaun has clearly proven to practice patience, love, and tolerance through all of his affairs, and if you take the time to just have a single conversation with this man you will feel the sincerity through his aura and soul. I have watched this man give back to the community so freely despite the continuous blowback and doubts he is always getting. I have known him to stay humble and positive even watching hundreds of antagonists and haters threaten his life and livelihood on various social media platforms. I have personally

witnessed Vaun give the last few dollars from his pocket or the coat off of his back to a random civilian on the street. I have been involved in specific community events he has organized to help so many while a handful of others take advantage of his benevolence. Despite these truths, Vaun has never flinched at the setbacks, responded to the enmity, or given up helping the most vulnerable people. Vaun has never backed down from standing up for the causes that ultimately will break your heart, each destined to be set up in a system designed to have some significant challenges or typically unfavorable statistics.

Although my journey is quite different than Vaun's, being a white woman from Whitefish Bay with solid societal advantages and a little bit lighter of lived experiences, I trust Vaun and his heart with my own. Vaun has not only been a beneficial professional partner in community work, but he also has become someone I would consider a friend. He may not consider me the same, but what he has done for me over the years is more than honorable. The time he has taken to educate me when he shouldn't have to, or answer my phone calls when he probably had a few dozen more important ones, or shown up for me when I felt completely weak of exhaustion even though his own week proved to be filled with even more burnout. All of these things have shown care, honor, and compassion in ways that many close in my life could never live up to. I am not ignorant to that truth. I truly believe many others should set aside their prejudices to see this as well.

There isn't a doubt in my mind that whatever hardships Vaun is facing are specifically existing through a targeted agenda from those threatened by his decency, his humanitarian heart, and his actual success in providing better health, second chances, community resources, and most importantly peace in this city. One thing I have learned for sure this past decade is that structural inequalities do exist, and Milwaukee literally proves to be an epicenter of obstacles and exacerbated disparities that are also the heartbeat of this city. Progress could never be made without consistent, year round, or even daily work, and few are able to face these traumas daily and still provide love and hope in return. Indisputably, Vaun Mayes is this fixture. Through my own personal decade of transformational reform within the community, I never knew anyone who's compassion aligned with my own. I never met anyone who practiced altruism in such prominent ways without saying they were "altruistic". I thought I would never meet another person who understood my heart and hope for others who were far too often silenced. And then I met Vaun. To this day I am still completely blown away. His love, his work, his integrity, and his authenticity has outmatched my own and anyone else I ever looked up to in admiration. Through his positive leadership, his contagious kindness, and his solid heart led by his incredible mind, I just feel extremely grateful to have witnessed this in the ways that I have. Today I am proud to say that I now know Vaun rather than just being lucky enough to have met him. I hope this letter helps you to know him a bit more too, because you really should. Vaun deserves to be known and seen by our community in the actual light that he shines upon it. Through ignorance this light may be dimmed, but the people, places, and historical moments that are illuminated by his love for others and this city will always brighten this world.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate.
Only love can do that." -MLK JR.

Thank you for reading,

Jacqueline Bogenberger

Letter regarding Mr. Vaun Mayes inbox x

Alan Chavoya <alan.chavoya.1994@gmail.com>
to me

10:44AM (3 minutes ago)

Dear Honorable Judge,

I am writing to you today as a concerned community member wanting to express support for Vaun Mayes. I've known Mr. Mayes for many years now, and at times we have collaborated on different projects to support our communities. I've witnessed Mr Mayes tirelessly put on events for our communities, advocate for people impacted by various forms of racist repression, and show an inspiring love to those who are rendered most vulnerable in our city.

People like Mr. Mayes are indispensable to our communities. We lack so much and face many challenges, but organizers and leaders like Mr. Mayes help bring us together to advocate for our needs. His work with Black and Brown youth has served as a guiding light for our youths and their families in the face of so much violence. Any time there is an incident in our neighborhoods, you can count on Mr. Mayes being there to support our communities.

Removing Mr. Mayes from our communities will be a major loss and setback. However Mr. Mayes pleads, I ask that you consider how his removal from our communities will negatively impact us. If Mr. Mayes is to face any punishment, may it be an alternative to time served behind bars.

Milwaukee needs people like Mr. Mayes. I hope you can understand the conditions we face and his role in helping our communities advocate for the changes we need.

Sincerely,

Alan Chavoya, MATC instructor and community organizer

Vaun L. Mayes character Letter

Inbox x

Michelle Joseph <dearmichelle_03@yahoo.com>
to me ▾

Mon, Oct 14, 7:32 PM (14 hours ago)



Hello,

My name is Michelle Joseph and I am writing this letter in consideration for the courts to work with Vaun L. Mayes and clear his record of his past mistakes. He has grown into a wonderful individual that loves his community and he works well with others trying to make Milwaukee a safe and thriving place. He is a great asset to the community and his work speaks for itself. Some people do not like working a paid job, so can we imagine how much he loves his community to work absolutely FREE. His past is just that, a past and he's worked tremendously to grow his character and be a warm asset to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and surrounding area. I do not know Vaun personally but I've seen him in passing during community events that's he has hosted to keep Milwaukee a safe place and his character speaks volume. Please consider working with Vaun so that he may continue to thrive with his personal growth and his social development. This city needs him! Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, I was not able to get off work to attend the court hearing but like myself and many others...we stand with him fully and respectfully because he's shown the world what change can be.

Respectfully,

Michelle Joseph

Any questions please feel free to email me at dearmichelle_03@yahoo.com or call 414-349-7198

Deniese Redd
15326 W Rogers Dr
New Berlin, Wisconsin 5315
Deniese.Ellis@gmail.com
414-412-6511

October 14, 2024
The Honorable Pamela Pepper
US District Courts
517 E Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Re: Vaun Mayes

Your Honor,

My name is Deniese Redd. I am writing on behalf of Vaun Mayes. I would like to add my experience with him to the information you already have.

I have found Vaun to be very kind and generous. I've seen him serving the community, especially those devoid of any resources. He is quick to address issues of protentional conflict as his goal is to de escalate rising tensions.

Vaun has cared passionately for his own children as well as the children of the community. This is beautiful in that he has not had a childhood of protection for himself.

Thank you for your attention to this case. I am confident you will act in Vaun's best interest and for that I am grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Deniese Redd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deniese Redd

Roselyn Staples

15326 W Rogers Dr

New Berlin, Wisconsin 53151

roselynaronson@gmail.com

262-844-3021

October 10, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Pepper

US District Courts

517 E Wisconsin Ave

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Re: Vaun Mayes

Your Honor,

My name is Roselyn Staples. I am a retired registered nurse with community health experience in the City of Milwaukee and a retired pastor having served in a Megachurch for 30 years.

I am writing to provide additional information and provide my perspective and who I have found Vaun Mayes to be.

I learned of Vaun 7 years ago at about the time of the incidents for which he has been investigated. This story was of compelling interest to me as 57 years ago I was a new graduate nurse during the racial riots. I learned then, as I interacted with affected families, that we all feel the same pain and cry the same tears.

My first encounter with Vaun was at Sherman Park where my church was serving food. As I listened to Vaun tell of his work I remember saying, "You are doing the work of Jesus that I should be doing but I am not positioned to do it. I would like to contribute financially to your work so you can do that which God has clearly directed His people to do"

Throughout these seven years I have found Vaun to be gracious and to walk with integrity. I stand in awe of how he has been able to continue with his work, focusing on the needs of others, while still being under the pressure of this investigation.

I have appreciated that he has never requested money for himself, but when I have been able to contribute, he has been a faithful steward of these funds. I have known of instances where he has been without basic comfort measures while helping them become available to others.

I'd also like to add my perspective to the charges he now faces. I have often seen him take videos of disturbing events and make comments but always for the purpose of de-escalation. His stated purpose for involving himself in incidents is de-escalation.

I so appreciate your careful attention to this case, Your honor. I can't imagine how difficult it must be to seek truth in these complex stories. I trust that your decisions will produce the best possible outcome for Vaun under the principles of the law.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Although I am an 81 Y/O Caucasian I think of Vaun with the love and attention of a grandchild often signing off to him as Gramma Roselyn.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roselyn Staples". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Roselyn Staples

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for Vaun Mayes, whom I have had the privilege of knowing for the past 5-6 years. As the Assistant Superintendent of the Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center, formerly known as the House of Correction, I have worked closely with Vaun on numerous occasions. One such event was our Credible Messenger event, where Vaun played an instrumental role in uplifting, educating, and inspiring incarcerated individuals.

In all the time I have known Vaun, he has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to his community. His work goes far beyond mere activism; he dedicates himself to fostering positive change. Whether it's organizing giveaways for families in need, hosting youth-centered events, or providing holiday support for those who might otherwise go without, Vaun is always working to give back.

One of the most impactful aspects of Vaun's work is his ability to deescalate volatile situations. He often steps in to mediate and prevent conflicts from escalating, reducing the violence that might otherwise occur. His efforts have made a tangible difference in our city, contributing to the safety and well-being of the community.

Vaun Mayes is truly an asset to Milwaukee. His passion for helping others and his dedication to reducing violence and improving the lives of those around him make him an invaluable part of our community. I believe that without Vaun and his team, Milwaukee would face greater challenges in maintaining peace and unity.

I respectfully ask that you consider Vaun's positive contributions as you review his case. His dedication to the betterment of Milwaukee is undeniable, and his absence would be felt deeply by many.

Sincerely,
Anthony T. Dodd Sr.

 10/14/2024

10/14/2024

Sharisse M. Lucas

3618 N. 55th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53216

Re: Character letter for Van L. Mayes

Dear Honorable Judge Pepper,

My name is Sharisse Lucas, and I am the Founder of Lucas Cares, a community-based outreach organization, that advocates for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence, mental illness, addiction, but mainly homelessness in Milwaukee County and surrounding areas.

I am writing this letter in support of Van L. Mayes. This is regarding an incident that allegedly occurred on or around August 15th or 16th in 2016. I have been following the work that Mr. Mayes has done in the community. Since this occurrence, I can vouch that Van is a person who has strong leadership skills, he motivates and inspires his team to achieve tough goals, he builds relationships and connect people through a shared purpose of building and restoring our broken community.

Van was an adult when this alleged incident occurred. Quite honestly, he wasn't as mature as he is today, and probably didn't use his best judgement. Based on our own individualities and mindsets we sometimes make decisions that come with serious consequences. His mindset has changed, and he sees things in a different light. If you allow Mr. Mayes another chance to do this all over again, I'm sure he will make better decisions and only involve himself in situations that will result in a positive resolution.

Mr. Mayes is hated by some but loved by many. I always say, "to know him is to love him". If one would really sit down and take the time to get to know Van, they would see that he has a love for people and his community.

Van has received countless awards and accolades for his work as we consider, (ten toes down and boots on the ground).

Honorable Judge Pepper, I am asking that you have mercy on Mr. Mayes and allow him to continue doing the great work that he is doing daily. Rather than imposing a sentence and incarceration upon him, I pray that with careful consideration, that you see fit to completely dismiss this case against him.

Sincerely,

Sharisse M. Lucas



Milwaukee Turners, Inc
1034 N Vel R Phillips Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53203

10/14/2024

President
Art Heitzer

Dear Judge Pepper,

I'm writing to ask for clemency on behalf of Vaun Mayes.

Vice President
Michelle Velasquez

Please grant him time served and dismiss the charges against him.

Executive Director
Emilio De Torre

I have known Vaun Mayes for almost 10 years, first encountering him when I worked with the ACLU of Wisconsin, and continuing to witness his good actions as he helped support healthy alternatives for young people after I became the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Turners at Turner Hall.

Operations &
Grants Manager
Krissie Fung

I have personally witnessed Vaun spend countless hours volunteering to create free youth programs, distribute free backpacks, food and resources to distressed communities and provide opportunities for peaceful gatherings for youth and adults alike.

Finance &
Administration
Manager
Ryan Findley

The Milwaukee Turners have had Vaun as an insightful panelist on our Vel Phillips Forum several times alongside County, City and State leaders such as elected officials, DOC Regional Chief Neil Thoreson, and religious leaders. He has always guided the public and elected officials to make constructive, peaceful decisions in stopping youth violence and finding alternatives.

Treasurer
Martha Collins

Secretary
Kristin Collett

Vaun has volunteered his skills, guidance and dedication to building an equitable community and helped host huge non-partisan events at Turner Hall and in parks across the county in partnership with the Milwaukee Turners, Wisconsin Voices, the NAACP, and dozens of other community groups.

School Board Chair
Brandon Williford

In my experience, Vaun has consistently used his large platform to help bend our city's arc toward justice. He is a mentor and a friend to countless adults and youth alike and tirelessly volunteers to provide assistance to Milwaukee communities in need, as well as to communities in other states afflicted by natural disasters.

Turner Board of
Trustees
Chris Ahmuty
Elizabeth Hoffman
MaggieNettesheim-
Hoffmann
Megan McGee
Tarik Moody
Nilesh Patel
Dr. Sequanna Taylor
Maylan Thomas
Brandon Williford
Sean Wilson

Even as I write this, the Turners are working with County Supervisor Sequanna Taylor and Vaun to provide receptacles to receive non-perishable food, cleaning supplies and new underwear and socks that Vaun and his team are having distributed to communities in Georgia ravaged by the recent hurricanes. We're also preparing to once again prepare and serve Thanksgiving turkey dinners to be distributed for free to under-resourced Milwaukee families.



Milwaukee Turners, Inc
1034 N Vel R Phillips Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53203

We are proud that Vaun Mayes is a card carrying Milwaukee Turner and we look forward to continuing to work with him to build the beloved community.

Please dismiss the charges brought against him.

I'm happy to answer any questions or help in any capacity.

Warmly,

Emilio De Torre
Executive Director

Shannon Ross
SRoss@thecommunitynow.us

October 13, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Pepper
U.S. District Court
527 E. Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Honorable Judge Pepper,

I am writing to share my personal experiences and insights regarding Vaun Mayes, a committed community advocate whom I have had the privilege of knowing and working alongside.

Throughout the time I've known Vaun, he has consistently demonstrated a deep devotion to improving the community, particularly in his efforts to stand up for marginalized populations. His work is not limited to any single cause or moment; instead, he shows up whenever and wherever he is needed, with a focus on those who often lack the voice or resources to stand up for themselves. Whether through organizing mutual aid, leading grassroots efforts, or offering support during moments of crisis, Vaun is someone who steps forward.

His activism has evolved over time, shaped by both successes and inevitable mistakes—mistakes that are part of the learning process in the complex and often painful pursuit of social change. As he continues to push for change, Vaun also seeks to hold himself accountable, acknowledging the need for ongoing learning and reflection. While his path has not been without challenges, his intentions and efforts have always been grounded in the well-being of others.

His passion for justice and equity, along with his willingness to learn from his mistakes, makes him an asset to the ongoing work of creating a better future for those who need it most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Shannon Ross
Founder/Executive Director of The Community

October 14, 2024
Honorable Judge Pamela Pepper
Chief Judge, U. S. District Court
Eastern District Of Wisconsin

Greetings Your Honor:

I am Mrs. Michelle Pitts, proprietor of The New Pitts Mortuary Funeral Home; located at 2031 West Capitol Drive here in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

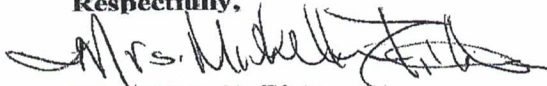
Your Honor, I am writing to you at this time, on behalf of Mr. Vaun L. Mayes, who I believe is scheduled to appear before your Court on October 16, 2024. My reason for writing this letter in support of Mr. Mayes, is because I have had personal interaction with Mr. Mayes on many occasions; during community outreach efforts of myself/The New Pitts Mortuary and other Community Based Organizations, in providing much needed help to families, here in the Inner City.

Mr. Mayes has been very instrumental in helping families in need of food, clothing, and housing, here in the City of Milwaukee. He has initiated efforts to provide school supplies, such as book bags, pencils and paper; clothing for children of incarcerated parents at the beginning of a new school year; toys and gifts for children and elderly persons during the Christmas Holidays; as well as, helping to spearhead efforts to assist families with burial funds to provide funeral and other burial services, for families with no funds to bury or to cremate family members; who don't qualify for any governmental assistance programs.

Your Honor, again, I'll say, in all my experience and encounters with Mr. Mayes he has shown himself to be a positive example and mentor to many in this city; and it is my prayer, that your Honor will consider these very meaningful and positive things Mr. Vaun Mayes has done in this community when he comes before your Court on October 16, 2024.

Finally, Your Honor, based on what I've seen of Mr. Mayes, I consider him to be a young man who has strived to make a positive impact in and on the lives of both young and old, men and women, here in the City of Milwaukee. Please consider these things when he appears before Your Honor.

Respectfully,


Mrs. Michelle Pitts